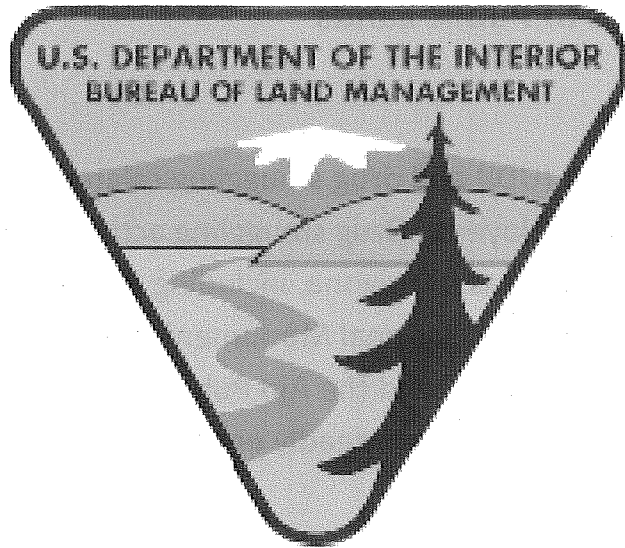


10.05.2010



BLM Arizona
US-Mexico Border
Strategic Action Plan

Safe and Secure Environment
Protection of Public Land Resources and Values
Coordination and Collaboration with Border Partners
Cross-Border Cooperation

Goal 1: Provide a Safe and Secure Environment for the Public, Employees and Users of Public Lands

Background

Undocumented Immigrant (UDI) and drug smuggling related violence remains a threat to the public and employees. Drug smuggling activities have been on the rise in the southern border areas of Arizona, including the Sonoran Desert (SDNM) and the Ironwood Forest (IFNM) National Monuments, the Las Cienegas and San Pedro Natural Conservation Areas, and the Ajo Public Lands Area. There has been an increase in potential for violent and deadly encounters.

Strategic Sequence

Ensure that employees and the public land users are aware of and take precaution in potentially dangerous areas on public lands.

Work with land management agencies, local government, tribes, law enforcement agencies and other partners to identify key areas for increased enforcement, closure and protection efforts.

Continue collaboration on radio coverage and interoperability.

Manage staff capacity to maximize ability of resource staff to complete field work.

Specific Actions

Employees and the Public:

- Provide public outreach on safety issues and conditions.
- Install pilot 1610 radio system for current updates to visitors.
- Increase borderlands safety awareness, communication systems, and training for employees.
- Ensure adequate road access to the public, permittees, law enforcement and emergency personnel.
- Increase availability of personal protection equipment and materials for employees working to clean up UDI waste and trash.

Law Enforcement:

- Increase patrol during busy recreation times.
- Coordinate with US Border Patrol, other Law Enforcement agencies, and tribes on joint operations to counter high UDI and narcotic trafficking.

Staff Capacity

- Provide additional Park Rangers for the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units to free up Law Enforcement Rangers for patrol.
- Collaborate with tribal governments on joint patrol and resource restoration projects.

Goal 2: Protect public land resources and values from the effects of smuggling.

Background

In response to the increase in illegal immigration and smuggling, the US Border Patrol has increased their presence along the southwestern border over the last several years. The Tucson Sector currently employs over 3,500 agents to patrol and perform interdiction and apprehension duties. This increased law enforcement focus on lands along the border in Arizona, 86% of which are federal or tribal lands, has created a need for enhanced communication and coordination between the US Border Patrol and the land management agencies. Illegal activities and the resulting law enforcement response create impacts to public lands. Increased coordination has resulted in an increase in requests for permits, authorizations and environmental review, often in very short time frames.

Strategic Sequence

Develop a process to increase regular coordination of law enforcement activities.

Develop a process for providing regular messaging to Border Patrol agents on natural and cultural resource values.

Work with Border Patrol and other agencies on establishing consistent environmental education training information and materials for Border Patrol Agents.

Specific Actions

Implement a Memorandum of Understanding/Coordination Plan between BLM Gila District and US Border Patrol -Tucson Sector for coordination and communication process.

Continue a visible law enforcement presence on the public lands most susceptible to illegal activities.

Install physical barriers to close illegally created roads in wilderness and other sensitive resource areas.

Goal 3: Coordinate and collaborate with border partners on safety, security and environmental protection, especially with the US Border Patrol

Background:

Natural and cultural resources on public lands, including units of the National Landscape Conservation System, have been negatively impacted as a result of illegal immigration and smuggling. Impacts are caused by foot and vehicle traffic of illegal cross border violators, as well as the unintended effects of interdiction and apprehension activities. Unauthorized roads and trails have been created across pristine desert, wilderness and fragile riparian areas as illegal crossers attempt to evade detection.

Illegal immigrants and smugglers create large volumes of trash, human waste, abandoned vehicles and bicycles on public lands. Estimates suggest that each immigrant creates eight pounds of trash and waste, including abandoned clothing, water containers, food remains, backpacks and toiletry articles. While concerted efforts have been made since 2003, using Southern Arizona Project and

other funding, numerous trash sites remain and continue to be created. Illegal dumps create hazardous conditions for users of public lands, wildlife, employees and volunteers who are tasked with cleaning these areas

Strategic Sequence:

Work with stakeholders, partners, tribes, law enforcement teams and others to determine areas of highest priority for habitat restoration and protection.

Identify and engage partners to assist with monitoring, restoration and repair of infrastructure (OHV groups, Friends Groups, tribes, etc).

Work with US Border Patrol on project coordination and resource protection issues.

Continue management and funding of the Southern Arizona Project through BLM appropriations.

Pursue opportunities with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Homeland Security, US Forest Service, tribes, state and local agencies for additional funding sources for trash and waste cleanup.

Work with Border Patrol and other law enforcement and land management agencies and organizations to continue to support the Secure Borders Initiative, eliminating future damage and degradation to resources.

Specific Actions

- Participate in monitoring protocols established by USGS – pilot project includes San Pedro River watershed.
- Develop a joint fire delegation of authority template between AZ State Lands, the Tohono O'odham Nation and BLM (other agencies as appropriate) for fire suppression.
- Develop fence designs to further prevent access to fragile resources in areas of high illegal activity.

- develop specific agreements with non-profits or other groups to adopt and maintain sections fence or other infrastructure in sensitive environmental areas and other locations.
- Work with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in joint planning on support of solid waste cleanup.

Goal 4: Work to Increase Cross-Border Cooperation on Ecosystem Health, Tourism, and Human Safety

Background

The US – Mexico border stretches nearly 2,000 miles from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. The Department of the Interior (DOI) has trust responsibility for natural and cultural resources along 793 miles (41%) of the border. In Arizona 44 miles of border are managed by BLM with 3.7 million acres within the 100 mile borderlands zone.

Environmental and social degeneration has occurred on both sides of the International border, including the construction of the border fence which has bisected some traditional and social communities.

Strategic Sequence

Actively engage with Department of the Interior - Field Coordinating Committee (FCC) partners and Mexican colleagues on local projects to support the goals of cross border healthy ecosystems.

Tier off commitments of the Secretary of the Interior and the Mexican Minister of Environment and Natural Resources for environmental collaboration with proposals for Arizona specific issues.

Reinitiate contacts with Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), and the Sonora Office of Tourism to identify projects for collaboration, based on the Geotourism Councils established as part of the pilot project. (or similar partnerships)

Establish regular communication/information exchange processes.